

Santa Rosa County District 3 Newsletter

A Message From Your Commissioner



**District 3
Commissioner
W.D. "Don" Salter**

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the mail.

Spring has sprung – I hope! We can always tell when spring is near as the birds sing louder and our recreational parks are filled with children and ball. If you have never seen a pre-T baseball game you have truly missed a very entertaining event. We are blessed in Santa Rosa County to have great community facilities for our citizens, especially our children. Sports provide controlled activities for our youth and helps keep them busy and off the streets and out of trouble. It helps develop them mentally, physically, teaches discipline and the value of team work.

One of the projects that I am currently working on, along with Commissioner Williamson and our Supervisor of Elections, Ann Bodenstein, is a new joint community center and voting precinct for the Wallace community and north Pace area. These two areas have had tremendous growth over the last several years and Precinct 2, Wallace, has become one of the largest precincts in the county. With this in mind, we must have a larger and permanent voting facility. The building will be constructed at the Sportsplex Park on Chumuckla Highway. If everything goes well, the project will be finished for the 2012 election. The facility will also be used for many community functions such as birthday parties, wedding receptions, senior citizen programs and a variety of other community uses.

Spring time also brings the enjoyment of many water activities, especially fishing. Another new project that I am excited about is the construction of a new boat ramp in the Chumuckla community. If everything goes well, the new ramp should be finished by the end of the year and will replace the old Sandy Landing ramp. The new ramp will be named "The Chumuckla Springs" boat ramp.

As always, I appreciate all the hard work of all our county employees as none of these projects would be possible without them. I also appreciate the support of all citizens in continuing to make Santa Rosa County a great place to call home.

Sincerely,
Don Salter
District 3 Commissioner

Whiting Aviation Park Update

Santa Rosa County's newest economic development recruitment tool, Whiting Aviation Park, is becoming a stronger asset every day. The Whiting Aviation Park will soon be readily identifiable as its entrance is under construction with the installation of a monument sign, and completion of the improvements on Marty Martin Way will soon be finished. Utilities are currently available to the perimeter of the park and the next phase of planning will identify the strategy for supplying those utilities to its interior.

The park is a critical asset being leveraged to attract cutting edge companies, primarily those in the aviation and defense industry. Right now, the runway and access to state of the art air traffic control systems aboard NAS Whiting Field serve as a key marketing tool. With the Limited Joint Use Agreement signed in 2009 between the Navy and Santa Rosa County, interested companies can now fly in to NAS Whiting Field in order to take a tour of the park and explore all of Santa Rosa County as they make their business development decisions. With anticipation of a future tarmac and taxiway that will serve to compliment industry operations of future park tenants, Whiting Aviation Park is an undeniably attractive option to many industries in the aerospace and defense sector.

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Five Points Update

In their meeting on January 27, the Santa Rosa County Board of Commissioners approved the redesign of the Five Points Improvement Project to construct a two lane rural roadway section for the new Berryhill segment. They also approved a request to the Regional TPO and FDOT to transfer the \$1,000,000 funding for Woodbine Road right-of-way to the Five Points project for its design, right-of-way acquisition, and roadway construction. Approvals are pending from both agencies. Notice to proceed for Five Points redesign will be issued after FDOT funding approval is received.

Phase 1 of the project is shown in dark grey on the map below and is expected to cost approximately \$2.09 million.

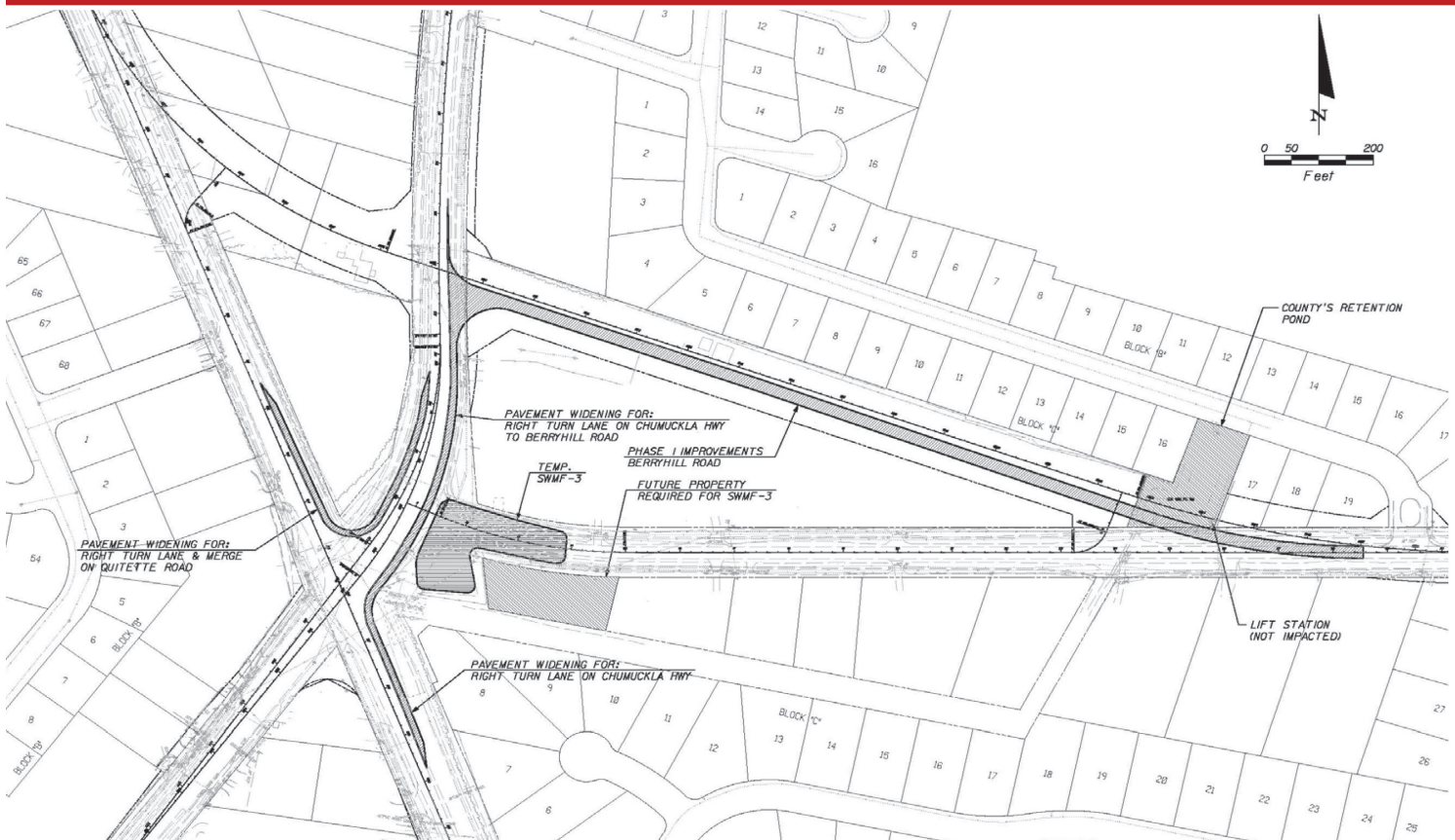
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TEAM Santa Rosa is actively marketing Whiting Aviation Park to U.S. site consultants as well as international aviation and defense industries. To date, TEAM has identified several potential tenants and is actively courting them to Santa Rosa County.

The county is anticipating an update to the Whiting Aviation Park master plan that will include a finalized recommendation for further implementation of park infrastructure, cost analysis for primary infrastructure, and other needed construction. An announcement of the details included in the next phase is forthcoming.

FIVE POINTS PHASED CONSTRUCTION





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District 3 Boat Ramps Update

Chumuckla Springs Boat Ramp

Progress is being made toward construction of a new boat ramp and park on Escambia River at the western end of Mineral Springs Road.

The new ramp will be owned by the county and will be open year around. It will replace the current Sandy Landing Boat Ramp which the county currently maintains subject to a license agreement with a private property owner. The new ramp is needed due to several reasons. First, the license agreement could be terminated by the property owner which would close the public ramp. Secondly, the property owner includes a condition in the license agreement that requires the county to close the ramp each year from January 1 to February 15. Lastly, the river bank in the area of the current ramp has experienced severe natural erosion due to several flooding events. The new ramp will be in a lake off the main river and will therefore not be subject to damaging river currents when the river is at flood stage.

The board of county commissioners approved funding for acquisition of approximately 21 acres for the new park on November 10. Interim county attorney, Angie Jones, has been working on the details of the land purchase contract and a closing in late March is anticipated.

The county engineering department is actively surveying the property, preparing the site plan, and seeking the environmental permits that are necessary for construction. The engineering and permitting process is expected to take six months. Therefore, we remain hopeful that construction can begin in October of this year with a goal of completing construction and opening the new park in January of 2012. The county's road & bridge department will be performing the construction in order to build the facility in the most cost effective manner.

Keyser and Webb Landings

Vandalism and destruction of public property is a great concern to county officials and taxpayers. Intentional damage to the dirt roads leading to Keyser and Webb Landings has been a periodic, but ongoing problem. To address this problem, Santa Rosa County Public Works has installed warning signage and electronic surveillance equipment. The sheriff's office has also increased patrols in the area. We urge our citizens to contact the sheriff's office if they witness intentional damage to these roads or any other public property.

Other District Three Boat Ramps

In addition to the boat ramps already mentioned, Santa Rosa County also maintains three other ramps on Escambia River at Williams Lake, Quintette Road, and Terrell Landing. County ramps have various amenities including primitive camping sites, barbeque grills, and portable restrooms. The Santa Rosa County website (www.santarosa.fl.gov) offers a wealth of information about all county boat ramps including locations and amenities provided. Just visit the website and click on "Parks and Recreation" on the left side of the home page under Services. Citizens can also call the parks department for information at (850) 983-1940.





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SR 87 Connector Study

For many years, plans have shown the need for a connector between SR 87 South and SR 87 North to improve the regional road network for hurricane evacuation, commerce, and congestion relief for US Hwy. 90. A project development and environmental, or PD&E, study is now underway to define the corridor and lay the groundwork for the future phases of design, right-of-way acquisition and construction.

The Florida Department of Transportation began the study in 2009, funded by three federal appropriations requested by the county. So far, FDOT has analyzed three potential corridors north of US Hwy. 90 and one corridor south of US Hwy. 90, looking at how each corridor met the purpose and need of the project along with impacts to the community and natural environment. After weighing all the factors, FDOT presented its finding of the locally preferred corridor to the public for comments in January. The preferred corridor starts at the intersection of US Hwy. 90/SR 87 South, in the vicinity of the sheriff's complex, follows the power line easement across the Blackwater River and connects into SR 87 North in the segment where SR 87 and SR 89 converge. The project will be a two-lane road with right-of-way acquisition for future expansion to four lanes.

After the Federal Highway Administration approves the locally preferred corridor, a more detailed analysis will begin to look at alternatives within the corridor. The current schedule calls for the alternatives to be presented to the public in a summer 2011 workshop and a winter 2012 public hearing. The study will conclude when FHWA approves the preferred alternative, scheduled for summer 2014. At this time, no funding has been identified for the future phases of design, right-of-way, or construction. Questions may be directed to the FDOT Project Manager Peggy Kelley at (850) 415-9517. Study presentations with maps may be viewed at www.sr87connector.com/news.html

Vets to VA Clinics Needs Your Support

Vets to VA Clinics, formerly Operation Connect Vet, is a revised and improved transportation program for Santa Rosa County veterans to the VA Joint Ambulatory Care Center in Pensacola. Due to lack of continuing revenue, Connect Vet was suspended. Sadly, there currently is no service and many Vets are currently just not able to go to important medical appointments.

Vets to VA Clinics is a newly structured program with an improved sustainable funding strategy of donations, grants, sponsorships and fund raisers to help ensure this vital program will be available far into the future!

Individuals and businesses can help with a tax deductible donation payable to :

Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Foundation/ Vets to VA Clinics
5191 C Willing Street
Milton, FL 32570

